



## **Budget-minded travelers discover Indiana for summertime fun**

*Special deals help families and couples looking to get away for less*

Summertime means fun. Family vacations, theme parks, camping trips and more. But many families this summer are faced with figuring out how to get away on a smaller budget. Shorter vacations closer to home are becoming popular alternatives to cross-country trips.

Fortunately, discount packages that include museum and theater tickets, dinner on the town and gift cards are giving budget-minded travelers across Indiana more options and more reasons to get away.

Indiana's tourism website, VisitIndiana.com, lists more than 200 getaway packages and coupons that bring down the cost of family fun, girlfriend getaways, romantic excursions or a weekend of golf.

Here's a sampling of the values you'll discover.

### **FAMILY FUN**

The new African Journey at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is part of a Picnic in the Park package. This exhibit, opening June 6, offers an interactive experience for visitors, plus all the animals you'd expect in the jungle, including giraffes that you can feed. And don't miss the hyenas – a first for the zoo. For \$182, stay overnight at the Staybridge Suites and get four tickets to the Children's Zoo and tokens to the African Journey exhibit. The package includes breakfast and a boxed lunch.

Get four tickets to Holiday World & Splashin' Safari – one of the most popular theme parks in the Midwest – when you stay at the Jasper Inn and Convention Center. Opening this summer is Pilgrims Plunge, the world's tallest water ride. The overnight package is \$225.



Exploration is part of what makes summer travel so much fun. In Southern Indiana, visit Squire Boone Caverns, discovered by Daniel Boone's brother more than 200 years ago. Guided tours take you deep into the caverns, where you'll learn how these passageways were formed beginning at a time when dinosaurs roamed here. Take a free one-hour cavern tour, and then play a round of miniature golf at Golf Shores. The tour, golf and an overnight stay for four at the Hampton Inn in Corydon is \$130.

For \$229 a night on weeknights, families can enjoy the comfort and luxury of the French Lick Springs Resort, along with a pizza dinner, bowling and an in-room movie.

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You also may want to tour the historic Marengo Cave, which is part of a “Rivers, Streams & Caves Package” at the Leavenworth Inn on the Ohio River. For \$167, four people can select between a cave tour or half-day canoe trip, have a place to sleep and get breakfast thrown in, too. In Lafayette, a family of four can play Monster Mini Golf, have burgers and fries at The Other’s Pub, stay overnight at the Days Inn and enjoy a leisurely continental breakfast all for \$134.

Make it a family reunion at the Rawhide Ranch in Brown County, where horseback riding and old-fashioned relaxation are on tap. The public riding facility features 54 scenic acres located just three minutes from downtown Nashville. Stay in the two-story ranch house, where the horses sleep on ground level and guests upstairs. Pond fishing and campfires replace Internet access, TVs and phones. Book one night, and get half off the cost of the second night.

The “Experience, Explore, Discover, Escape Package” is designed to help you do all of the above. This mini-vacation offer four nights at the Hilton Garden Inn in Carmel just north of Indianapolis, a hot breakfast for four each day, and tickets to some of the area’s most popular attractions, including the Indianapolis Children’s Museum, Indianapolis Zoo, Conner Prairie and the Monon Center, which offers a water park, nature trails and fitness center in Carmel. The action-packed four-night package is \$499 for Thursday through Sunday travel.

That’s just one of several summertime deals including attractions in and around downtown Indianapolis. Other packages include visits to the storied Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum, Indiana State Museum and IMAX Theatre, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra or the Caribbean Cove Indoor Water Park – where it’s easy to make a big splash when you’ve got 50,000 square feet of water. You won’t go hungry on your trip, either: Nearly every package includes a hot breakfast, and many include dinner, too.

### **GIRLFRIEND GETAWAYS**

Some girls just want to get away for fun. Throughout the state, you’ll find special deals to make a girlfriend getaway a lot more enticing. In Fort Wayne, four can spend the night at the Staybridge Suites, have breakfast, get a manicure at the Woodhouse Spa, take a tour at DeBrand Chocolates, and each receive a \$25 gift card to the Jefferson Pointe Mall. The cost is \$65 per person.

In Indianapolis, stay at the Hilton Garden downtown, receive an \$80 gift certificate to Studio 2000, have dinner at SI Restaurant & Lounge and breakfast for two for \$299 per room. Or, get a \$50 Nordstrom gift card, a complimentary gift from Origins, Personal Touch Shopper Service, a Circle Centre Mall Savings Passport and breakfast for two at the Conrad, in downtown Indianapolis, just steps away from Circle Centre Mall. The overnight stay for two is \$259.

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If you crave a shopping trip and love the thrill of a bargain, you'll appreciate the packages, gift cards and coupons being offered by two Indiana outlets. Travel to Northern Indiana for an overnight stay for two at the Country Inn & Suites, and get a \$25 Visa gift card and a coupon book that'll help you save even more at the nearby Lighthouse Place Premium Outlets in Michigan City. After a day of shopping among the 120 shops, you'll enjoy a complimentary dinner. Breakfast also is included in the \$152-a-night package.

The Edinburgh Premium Outlets near Columbus offers discounts at more than 60 of its stores through the VIP Coupon Book, something Web visitors will get for free when they go to [premiumoutlets.com/edinburgh](http://premiumoutlets.com/edinburgh).

This Girlfriends Getaway deal is so good you almost think they're paying you to take it. The Potter's Wheel bed and breakfast in Richmond has a "Girls Escape Package" that costs \$100 per person but includes more than \$90 worth of gift certificates for local restaurants and such merchants as the Secret Ingredient Boutique and Warm Glow Candles.

While brand-name shopping at a discount brings its own pleasures, there's plenty of shopping in small boutiques, whether you're looking for antiques, hand-made crafts or one-of-a-kind designs. The downtown square in historic Madison has dozens of quaint shops where there really is something for everyone. And after a day of shopping, enjoy the whirlpool at the Holiday Inn Express, a glass of wine and dinner at the Key West Shrimp House. The package is \$170.

### **SUMMERTIME ROMANCE**

*Travel & Leisure Magazine* named Songbird Prairie Bed and Breakfast one of the 20 Perfect Summer Getaways in 2008, and American Historic Inns called it one of the top 10 Romantic Inns. Located in Valparaiso, it's known for its European linens, warming fireplaces and private baths with soothing spa tubs. This summer, spend the night, have dinner, sparkling beverages and chocolates, and wake up to a three-course hot breakfast in the sunroom where there's a good chance the songbirds will serenade. The overnight package is \$259.

In Bloomington, the award-winning Wampler House is offering a one-day stay package that includes dinner at a local restaurant, a spa treatment gift certificate, and a luxury room with a fireplace and Jacuzzi for \$275.

For those seeking an even more economical romantic getaway, check out the Washington Street Inn in Bluffton, where you'll find a Victorian home filled with collectibles. Dinner at the nearby Rittenhouse Restaurant, breakfast and an overnight room are available for an amazing \$75 a night.

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The Days Inn in Lafayette has a “Budget Saver” package that includes an overnight room, continental breakfast, bowling and pizza dinner for two, all for \$89.

Beterra Casino Resort and Spa has a \$99 overnight with two breakfast buffets that could be a perfect excuse for a couple’s night out of town.

## GOLF

One of the state’s most anticipated golf courses opened this spring at French Lick. The greatest challenge of the 18-hole Pete Dye Course at French Lick might be keeping your eye on the ball, because the panoramic views from the hilltop course are breathtaking. You’ll find special packages for the golf lover in French Lick, and several other top courses throughout the state.



Sultan’s Run – located among rolling hills, woods, water and wildlife and named one of *Golf Digest’s* top public courses – brings golfers to Jasper in Southern Indiana. Go there yourself and enjoy an overnight package for \$182.

In Peru, \$130 will get you a round at challenging Rock Hollow Golf Club and a night’s sleep at the Best Western Circus City Inn.

Options in and around Indianapolis include Crooked Stick in Carmel, home to the 2009 U.S. Senior Open; Brickyard Crossing in Indianapolis; and Purgatory, which is north of the city. You’ll find 297 holes of golf in special packages in and around the Circle City. At Fox Prairie in Noblesville, four golfers can play for the price of three on Fridays with the printable coupon from VisitIndiana.com.

Regardless of what you like to do, you’ll find plenty of options in Indiana this summer. And thanks to deals, discounts and packages, it might be one of your most affordable getaways ever.

For more information about individual packages, to print coupons and learn more about travel discounts in Indiana, go to VisitIndiana.com.

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## SIDEBAR

### Save money with Indiana travel coupons

Printable coupons are available at VisitIndiana.com. A sampling of coupon offers.

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**Children's Museum of Evansville (cMoe)**, Evansville – Buy one admission, get one free.

**College Football Hall of Fame**, South Bend – Buy one admission, get one free.

**Conner Prairie**, Fishers – \$3 off general admission.

**Derby Dinner Playhouse**, Clarksville – \$5 off dinner show tickets.

**Evansville African-American Museum**, Evansville – Buy one admission, get one free.

**Farmland Cultural Center**, Farmland – \$5 adult dinner theater ticket

**Holiday World**, Santa Claus – \$7 off general admission in May, \$5 off general admission in June.

**General Lew Wallace Study & Museum**, Crawfordsville – Buy one admission, get one free.

**Indiana Beach Amusement Resort**, Monticello – \$5 off combo ride and water park pass.

**Marengo Cave**, Marengo – \$2 off cave tour.

**Seiberling Mansion**, Kokomo – Buy one admission, get one free.

**Wood Wind Golf Club**, Westfield – Four play for the price of three.

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